A GROUP FROM THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING FLOCK VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, 15/28 April 2022, a group of the Russian-speaking flock with priests and laity, accompanied by His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth visited the Patriarchate for the feast of Pascha.

The pious group was received and blessed by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. His Beatitude also spoke to them about our Saviour Jesus Christ Who was risen from the dead and co-resurrected us, and that the Lord is the cornerstone of the Church and the centre of our lives in the power of His light.

From Secretariat-General

GIRLS' NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM OF GREECE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Thursday, 15th / 28th of April 2022, the girls' National football team of Greece visited the Patriarchate accompanied by the representative of the Greek Consul General, Mrs Zaharioudaki Christina.

This group was accepted by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of

Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers. His Beatitude praised the team members for their athletic efforts, saying that the Church Fathers also set the athletes as an example for the exercise of both their bodies and mind, having continence as an example for the spiritual feats in the arena of virtue acquisition.

Moreover, He wished to these girls the power, the grace and the light of the Resurrected Christ to succeed in their profession and exercise, and characterized them as "a living hope and an example to imitate", having Christ in the centre of their lives, Who said, "I am the way and the truth and the life". "We are Christ's nation, we are free". We survive the unsettled situations of the Holy Land in the name of Christ. We are Christ's nation. Globalization is the overturn of natural laws. Bear in mind "Iniohos" as the Fathers say, the horse which remained focused on its target without wearing blinkers.

For this visit, the representatives of the football team gave His Beatitude the t-shirt of their team and a vessel of ancient Greek art, while the latter gave them icons and His blessing for their visit to the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

THE VISIT OF THE CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM ON THE OCCASION OF OUR PASCHA

On Wednesday, 14/27 April 2022, Wednesday of the Bright Week, the Churches of Jerusalem visited the Patriarchate on the

occasion of our Pascha.

The first to visit the Patriarchate was the Franciscan monks, the custody of the Holy Land, under their Abbot, Fr Francesco Patton, whom His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed as follows:

"Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,

Beloved members of our respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers

We welcome you warmly to our Patriarchate and we thank you for your thoughtful and heartfelt Paschal greetings.

We are living at a time when the contrast between the darkness of Good Friday and the light of Easter have never been more apparent to us. On Good Friday we sang these words:

The whole creation was charged in fear,

When it saw you, O Christ,

Hanging on the Cross.

(Good Friday Vespers)

And now we can sing:

Your resurrection, O Christ our Saviour,

Has enlightened the whole world;

And you have restored your own creature.

(Paschal Vespers)

This experience of darkness and light in our liturgy mirrors the experience of darkness and light in our lives and in our world.

The common purpose and efforts in which our Brotherhoods have been engaged in recent years have borne real fruit. In the care of the Holy Places and in the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity, we have accomplished much of importance together. Our united voice and witness have brought to the attention of the world the increasing challenges and threats that we face, and we take the opportunity of this blessed feast to thank you once again for your steadfast commitment to this.

We are fully aware of the realities we are experiencing in this Holy City and our beloved Holy Land. These realities include the increased activity of well-known Israeli radical groups against Christian properties at Jaffa Gate and New Gate. They also include the authorities and many police obstacles that our worshippers have faced in coming to the Holy Fire ceremony. It is incumbent upon us, who have built such an effective partnership, to continue to do our best to encourage the other members of the Christian family here to be drawn into our cooperation. For our best future depends on our deepening cooperation and our clear united witness.

Day by day we must keep our presence in the Holy Land visible, locally, regionally, and internationally. At this time of the year the eyes of the world are on the Holy Land, and what they see when they look at us is crucial. They must understand our common mission as a Christian family here. Therefore, it is time to lay aside matters of pride and triviality for the sake of the greater good and for the sake of protecting the Christian presence in this region.

Pilgrims come here precisely to escape the darkness and difficulty of so much of life around the world. They come here to find comfort in times of fear, peace in times of unrest and violence; spiritual safety in times of worldly danger. They come here from the Good Friday of their daily lives even just for a brief glimpse of the light of the resurrection and the hope that this brings to them. In the Christian family here

they must see this same comfort, this same peace, this same spiritual safety, this same light and hope.

As we keep this joyful Eastertide, let us recommit ourselves to this spiritual mission to which the Divine Providence has called us. Let us encourage our brothers and sisters in the Christian family and beyond to join us in this collective witness to the light of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us, as the Liturgy reminds us, lay aside every earthly care, that we may receive the King of all who is risen from the dead, and who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9).

May God bless you, dear Father Francesco, and your Brotherhood during this glorious season of the Light that shines from the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, and May God bless all those entrusted in your care.

Christ is risen!

Thank you."

Then the other local churches visited the Patriarchate, the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem under the Latin Patriarch Pierre Battista Pizzaballa, the Coptic church, the Syriac, Ethiopian, Lutheran and others.

The Latin Patriarch and the other Heads of churches were addressed by His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos as per below:

"Your Beatitude, dear Archbishop Pizzaballa,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

We welcome you gladly to our Patriarchate, and we thank you

for your greetings as we celebrate this Easter feast. Our journey over these last few days has taken us from the darkness and fear of Good Friday to the triumph and joy of Easter Day.

With the Most Holy Mother of God on Good Friday we lamented:

Where, O my Son and God,

are the good tidings of the Annunciation

that Gabriel brought me?

He called you King and God and Son of the Most High;

And now, 0 my sweet Light,

I behold you naked, wounded, lifeless.

(Good Friday Vespers)

And yet, now we can sing with equal fervour:

Your resurrection, O Christ Saviour, has enlightened the whole world.

(Paschal Vespers)

We celebrate this Paschal Feast, confident that light has overcome the darkness, and hope has banished fear. This is the heart of the message that the world longs to hear in these times of war and conflict, confusion and distress, instability and dread.

In this Holy City in our beloved Holy Land, we are celebrating this blessed season confronted by certain realities that we must face. These realities include the increased activity of well-known Israeli radical groups against Christian properties at Jaffa Gate and New Gate. They also include the authorities and many police obstacles that our worshippers have faced in

coming to the Holy Fire ceremony. Therefore, this is a reminder that we must be ever vigilant in remaining united in our common purpose, if we are to present ourselves, and be seen by others locally, regionally, and internationally, to be a Christian family here. As Saint Paul says, who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Romans 8:35).

We rejoice in the strength and commitment of the mutual respect and understanding that exist between us, and we take this blessed opportunity, Your Beatitude, to express our gratitude for, and our recognition of, all that you have done and continue to do to ensure the best possible cooperation between our two communities.

We must continue to do all in our power to bring along the other members of our Christian family here into a closer fellowship of purpose and resolve. We must build on the foundation that we share, so that we may be stronger to meet the challenges and difficulties that we are all facing in the current climate. As we read in the First Epistle of Saint Peter, Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves, must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God MAY be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 4:11).

A world wrapped in fear looks to Jerusalem in hope, especially this season. MAY we, in all that we do, embrace without reserve our common vocation to be a living witness to this hope. MAY we be those who live the light of the resurrection, so that all those who are bound by terror and despair MAY find here joy, renewal and encouragement.

MAY God bless you, Your Beatitude, your colleagues, and the communities that you serve, and MAY the light that shines from the All-holy Tomb and Life-giving Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ banish all fear and darkness from our minds and hearts.

Christ is risen!

Thank you."

The Patriarchate returned this visit to the churches celebrating the Feast of Easter on the same date, the Syriacs, and Ethiopians, through His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia.

During the Bright Week also, the Communities of the Rum-Orthodox Arab-speaking flock of the Patriarchate visited His Beatitude, for the Feast of Easter.

From Secretariat-General

BROTHERHOOD VISITS FOR THE EASTER FEAST OF THE WESTERN CHURCHES

On Holy Tuesday morning, 6/19 April 2022, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood according to the custom and contributing to the peaceful pilgrims' coexistence, visited the Franciscan Fraternity Custodian in the Holy Land for the Feast of Easter.

For this visit, the Hegoumen of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed all present as follows:

"Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,

Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

We greet you today as you celebrate the Feast of Easter with joy and in Paschal hope. As Saint John of Damascus says on this feast:

For it is meet that the heavens should rejoice,

and that the earth should be glad,

and that the whole world, both visible and invisible,

should keep the feast;

for Christ, our everlasting joy, hath risen.

(The Canon of Pascha)

We celebrate the Paschal Feast with joy and hope, even in the face of so many challenges around the world and throughout our region. We celebrate the Paschal Feast with joy and hope, even in the face of conflicts and wars around the world. We celebrate the Paschal Feast with joy and hope, even in the face of grave difficulties facing our communities in this Holy City.

For we are privileged to celebrate Easter on the very spot where the blood of the Righteous One was shed and in the very place from which He was raised from the dead. This alone is a cause of joy and hope.

We remind ourselves at Easter that ours is an apostolic mission as the guardians and servants of the Holy Places, a mission of prayer, peace, reconciliation, and salvation.

And we have seen remarkable fruits of this mission in our common work to continue and complete the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. At no time in our history have our two Brotherhoods been in closer alliance and collaboration, and this is itself a cause of both joy and hope. We wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to you for your unwavering commitment to this work.

In our common mission, we continue to work to defend the rights of Christians to worship at the Holy Places and especially in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during this holiest of seasons in the face of the attempts by the authorities to restrict the number of worshipers. Together, we are standing against increasing threats from Israeli radical groups at Jaffa Gate and at New Gate, which have been exacerbated by the trespass into the Little Petra Hostel. And these incidents are in addition to the increase in the daily insults and intimidation to which our clergy and people are subjected.

As we celebrate this joyful and hopeful Paschal season, we recommit ourselves to our shared responsibility to do all in our power to preserve the Christian character of Jerusalem and to make it possible morally, spiritually, and materially for Christians to remain here in Jerusalem and in the Middle East. This is our home, and the power of the witness of the Gospel of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation in our broken and confused world depends on a vibrant Christian presence in the Holy Land.

We wish you, dear Father Francesco, your Brotherhood and the communities that you serve, a joyful and hope-filled Easter.

Christ is risen!

Thank you."

After this visit, the Brotherhood visited the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem, under the leadership of its Patriarch, Mr Pierre Batista Pizabala. During this visit His Beatitude delivered the following address:

"Your Beatitude, dear Archbishop Pizzaballa,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

We greet you, Your Beatitude, on the occasion of your celebration of the Easter Feast with the joyful words of the hymnographer:

Rejoice, O peoples, and be glad.

An angel sat upon the stone of the tomb;

He himself proclaimed the glad tidings to us, saying:

Christ is risen from the dead,

the Saviour of the world,

and he has filled all things with fragrance.

Rejoice, O peoples and be glad.

(Matins of Bright Week)

We keep this joyful Paschal season at a time of great difficulty. Around the world, in our region, and in this Holy City, the human family faces a tremendous challenge. There are wars and conflicts abroad, and here at home, the Christian communities are enduring unprecedented threats to our very existence and to the integrity of the true character of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

And yet, we keep the Paschal Feast with joy and confidence. We are bound together in our common mission here, and we have shown our united witness in the face of those who would undermine both our way of life as well as the historic and universally recognised basis of our rights and privileges as those who have lived and worshipped here for centuries. We are the living witness that Jerusalem and the Holy Land belong to one community exclusively; this is a home to peoples of diverse faiths and traditions, and our mission is to ensure that all may live and worship in Jerusalem and the Holy Land

safely and in harmony.

We wish to take this opportunity to commend you, Your Beatitude, for your ongoing commitment to your own pastoral work and mission. In times like the present, when our people are living under such tremendous pressure, the pastoral vocation of the Church I sour the utmost importance. We have the responsibility to do all that is in our power — morally, spiritually and practically — to support and help our communities so that Christians are able to remain here in their homes and with their livelihoods. At no other time in recent history has the health and strength of the Christian presence here been more vital.

The good relations that we share and the common witness in the face of challenges that we show are of crucial importance in maintaining the Christian presence here. We are committed to deepening these relations and strengthening our common witness so that the world may know and understand the seriousness of our mission.

Among these commitments is the defence of the rights of Christians to worship at the Holy Places and especially in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during this holiest of seasons in the face of the attempts by the authorities to restrict the numbers of worshipers. Also, we stand together to protect the Christian Quarter against increasing threats from Israeli radical groups at Jaffa Gate and at New Gate, which have now found a new extreme in the trespass into the Little Petra Hostel. And we continue to raise our collective voice in the face of increased daily insults and intimidation to which our clergy and people are subjected.

Our shared commitment to defend and preserve the Christian presence here gives us joy and confidence in this Paschal season, and this is why we can rejoice, even in the face of all that is happening in our world and in our region. For in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead we

have been given the assurance of the ultimate victory of life over death. As Saint Paul reminds us.

I am convinced that neither death,

nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present,

nor things to come, nor powers,

nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,

will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:38-39)

We wish you, Your Beatitude, and your communities, the joy of this Easter Feast, and the confidence that is our in the resurrection. MAY God bless you and you care for those who are entrusted to your pastoral oversight.

Christ is risen!

Thank you."

Finally, His Beatitude, accompanied by the Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos and Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina visited the Apostolic Delegate, representative of the Vatican in Jerusalem and the Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem Most Reverend Naoum Housam.

From Secretariat-General

THE VISIT OF THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENERGY OF GREECE TO THE PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of Monday, March 29 / April 11, 2022, the Minister of Development and Energy of Greece, Mr Konstantinos Skrekas, visited the Patriarchate while on a one-day visit to Israel, accompanied by his associates, Mr Nikolaou Giotopoulos, Mr Theodoros Tsakiris, Mr Manousos Manousakis and the Ambassador of Greece to Tel Aviv Mr Kyriakos Loukakis and the Consul of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

His Excellency the Minister and his associates were warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

During this visit, there was a discussion about the recent tense political situation after the occurrence of severe violence and its victims and about the efforts of the Patriarchate to create an appeal.

There was also a discussion about the help of the Patriarchate to the needy Palestinians — members of this flock and others, about the cancellation of paying the rent of their homes for the year 2020 of the encroachment the Christians undergo of their property, of the hotel "Mikra Petra" and of the irrational security measures of the Police for the ceremony of the Holy Light on Holy Saturday.

At this critical juncture in the history of the Patriarchate, the Minister said that the Greek Government would make every effort to secure the property and the pilgrimage rights for the benefit and prosperity of the Christian element.

For this visit, His Beatitude offered the Minister a plaque of Jerusalem and blessings for his associates, while the latter

offered His Beatitude cufflinks set and asked His blessing to venerate the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

"SYRIZA" PARLIAMENT PATRIARCHATE

MEMBERS VISIT

OF THE

On Wednesday, 24 March / 6th April 2022, the envoys of the "SYRIZA" political party, Ioannis Bournous, Dionysios Charalambous Kalamatianos, Dora Augeri, Theopisti Perka, Olympia Teligioridou and Kostas Zahariadis visited the Patriarchate and were received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In this meeting, the Parliament members of this delegation asked His Beatitude to inform them of the problems of the Patriarchate and the ways by which they may contribute to their solution.

His Beatitude informed them about the history of the Patriarchate and its land property, the Shrines and the Holy Monasteries of the Old City of Jerusalem and about the pastoral and cultural mission of the Patriarchate, which is mainly pacifying amidst the ongoing political tension in the Holy Land.

The Parliament members also asked and received information about the recent seizure of the 'little Petra' hotel by the radical elements who have rented the Jaffa Gate hotels through illegal and obscure contracts.

His Beatitude also referred to the decisive contribution of the President of "SYRIZA" and then Prime Minister of Greece Mr Alexis Tsipras to the Historical Renovation of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

His Beatitude offered them blessings from Jerusalem and they left to venerate the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

THE CHIEF OF THE HELLENIC AIR FORCE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday morning, 21 March / 3rd April 2022, the Chief of the Hellenic Air Force, Air Marshal Mr Themistoclis Bourolias, visited the Patriarchate, accompanied by his wife Mr Galateia Peraki and his associates, Colonel Mr George Petrou, Lieutenant Commander Mr Theodoros Tsiros, Airforce Major Mr Nikolaos Papagiannis, Airforce Major Mr Spyridon Lytaris, and Pilot Officer Euphrosyni Liarokap and Pilot Officer Mr Ioannis Karvounis.

Mr Bourolias was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In this meeting, His Beatitude informed the Air Marshal of the recent escalation of the occupation of the Little Petra Hotel and the protest of the Patriarchate after the other churches for the return of this property to its owner.

The Hagiotaphite Brotherhood is in charge of resolving this very serious problem and is fighting for the preservation of Jerusalem and the confirmation of its Christian identity.

The delegation under Mr Bourolias thanked H.H.B. for the reception and the information and left to venerate the Holy Sepulchre and Gethsemane.

His Beatitude wished for the divine power to the Hellenic Air Force for the defence of our homeland and gave them his blessing, the Holy Cross and the icon of the Theotokos of Jerusalem and blessings from Jerusalem for his associates.

Mr Bourolias offered His Beatitude a souvenir emblem of the Hellenic Airforce.

From Secretariat-General

A GROUP OF DEPUTIES OF THE POLITICAL PARTY "SYRIZA" VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Thursday, 18th / 31st of March 2022, a group of deputies of the "SYRIZA" political party, consisting of Mr Ioannis Amanatidis, Mrs Kalliopi Vetta, Mr Theodoros Dritsas and Mr Andreas Mihaililis visited the Patriarchate.

This group was accepted by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers. In the context of this visit, His Beatitude informed the main deputies about the recent creation of an occult illegal situation since the occupation of the hotel "Little Petra" by extreme settlers of Ateret Conanim, about the protest of the Patriarchate for this act and its demand to leave this area and the return of the hotel to its owner, which is the Patriarchate.

The support of the Greek Government in such a solution is of

decisive importance and will be duly appreciated.

There was also a discussion about the decisive contribution of the then Prime Minister of Greece and President of "SYRIZA" Mr Alexis Tsipras in the historical renovation of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

Asking for the blessing of His Beatitude, the deputies left to venerate the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM OF GREECE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Monday, March 15th / 28th, Mr Vassilios Kikilias, Minister of Tourism of Greece, former Minister of Health and Management of the Pandemic, visited the Patriarchate, accompanied by the Ambassador of Greece in Tel Aviv Mr Kyriakos Loukakis and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

The Minister was warmly received by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

Welcoming the Minister, His Beatitude said that this visit takes place in a critical for the Patriarchate time, that is the pressure of the Christian existence and of the Patriarchate itself by the extreme radical elements involved the opaque contracts of mortgaging the Patriarchate's hotels in Jaffa Gate.

The Patriarchate, His Beatitude continued, carries on under different governments and adverse conditions its conciliatory, pacifying and balancing role, to keep the Status Quo in the Old City, which means the peaceful co-existence among Christians, Jews and Muslims and it asks for this to be recognized.

The Minister said he came to Jerusalem to venerate the shrines and meet His Beatitude and having carefully listened to His concerns and words, he will act so that the Greek Government officials will intervene and ask the Israeli Government to solve the Patriarchate's problems in governmental justice, according to its history and work.

On this occasion, His Beatitude offered the Minister a souvenir medal from the renovation of the Sacred Edicule in 2017 and a silver painting of Jerusalem, while Mr Kikilias offered in return a copy of a silver cover of the Holy Gospel.

The Minister thanked His Beatitude for this meeting and the latter wished him success in his mission, before the Minister left to venerate the Holy Sepulchre, where the Geronda Sacristan, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis welcomed him.

From Secretariat-General

SCHOOL EVENT FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF MARCH 25, 1821

On Thursday evening, 11/24 March 2022, the feast of the anniversary of March 25,1821.

The school event was organized by the care of the Managing Director Archimandrite Mattheos and the cooperation of the teachers and the novice students and was honoured by the presence of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Chairman of the School Board His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, Hagiotaphite Archimandrites and Priests, Nuns, members of the Greek community and others.

The well-organized ceremony included an introductory speech by the Managing Director, the Sermon of the day by the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod Hierodeacon Simeon, performances by the students on stage and videos and songs by the guidance of Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos.

The reciting of the poems by the students gave information on the lives and the revolutionary actions of the fighters of 1821, Constantine Kanaris, Markos Botsaris, Andreas Miaoulis, George Karaiskakis, Theodore Kolokotronis. There was also a skilled performance by students of the nursery school which moved the audience.

With all the above the struggles of our ancestors over 400 years of bitter slavery were remembered, as well as the bravery and sacrifices of the whole Greeks, with special reference to the role of the Church and of the "secret school".

Despite the loss of life and the victims and the confiscation of property, these sacrificial actions brought the desired result of the overthrow of the Turkish yoke and the formation of the Greek state, under the rule of the Greek government, governed by the principles of grace, justice and freedom.

A special mention was made of the destruction of Smyrna on the completion of one hundred years since 1922 and the martyrdom of the Metropolitan of Smyrna Chrysostom. The contribution of the Hagiotafite Brotherhood during the period of 1821 was especially emphasized through the writings of Neophytos the Hagiotaphite Hieromonk of Cyprus.

The successful performance of teachers and students, which created a feeling of modesty of national pride and emotion, was exerted at the end of the ceremony by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, emphasizing that the role of the freedom of the Greeks is the freedom in Christ, while Mr Vlioras also praised the performance of the teachers and students.

From Secretariat-General